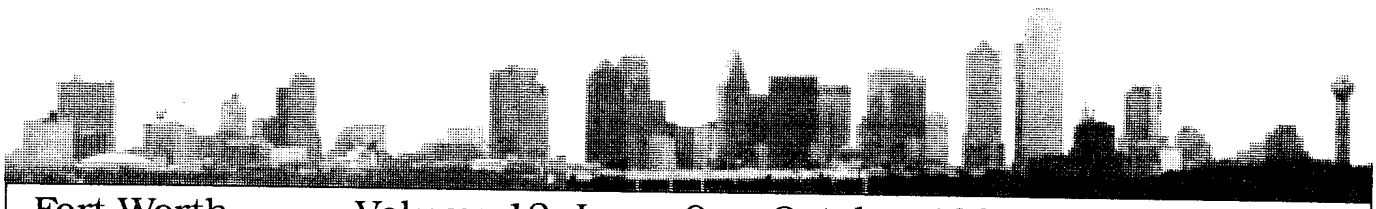
MCCC NEWS

Metroplex Commodore Computer Club



Fort Worth Volume 12 Issue 9 — October 1994 Dallas

Words From Jay

comments from the father of the Amiga
an interview by Danny Barnett

On May 14, approximately two months before his death, Amiga designer Jay Miner consented to a short, short interview with me on The Mission BBS in California, which he owned and operated. Even though I'm sure countless others could have done a better job of interviewing Jay, I thought MCCC members would be interested in seeing the results of my own small efforts.

DANNY BARNETT: What was the best part of designing the Amiga?

JAY MINER: The feeling of accomplishment. Nobody had a computer with all that color and sound then.

DB: Which model of the Amiga is your all-time personal favorite?

JAY: Personally I like the 2000 series.

DB: Did you have any input on AGA? If so, were there any features you wanted to include that got axed by the higher-ups?

JAY: C= did not consult me, but I did talk to some of the designers. I think they included just about everything I wanted that could be included, and then some.

DB: Have you seen the Amiga-generated visuals on shows such as *Babylon 5* and *Seaquest DSV*? If so, whaddaya think?

JAY: No, haven't seen them.

DB: When building the first Amiga, was there an ulterior motive to make the Amiga more than just a game machine, as Gary Oberbrunner apparently suggested once upon a time?

JAY: If you read any of the many articles about me and the Amiga you will know that I always wanted to make a computer that entered the market at the low end and was expandable to a real useful computer. There was nothing ulterior about it. The investors wanted a game machine (at first) and were happy as long as it could do that.

DB: Name some of your all-time favorite programs for the Amiga.

JAY: *OPUS* and this here *DLG BBS* program.

DB: How's the sysop business? What's the hardest part of running a BBS?

JAY: The hardest part is keeping up with the uploads, and deleting old files to make room for new ones.

DB: Any comments or feelings on the demise of Commodore?

JAY: Of course I'm sad. They brought it on themselves with poor marketing, lousy TV ads, wrong product positioning.

DB: How do you feel about the possible takeover of Amiga by a Korean or Japanese corporation? Is this a step in the right direction?

JAY: I just hope somebody keeps it alive.

DB: Will the Amiga survive into the 21st century?

JAY: How the mule muffins would I know. ✓

Jay Miner Interview

more information from the father of the amiga
interview — pasadena, september 1992 — interviewer unknown

The name badge says it all, Jay Miner, VIP, Father of the Amiga. During my recent jaunt to the A4000 launch in Los Angeles, I was lucky enough to meet and talk to Jay as he cast his fatherly eye over the next generation of the architecture he created all those years ago. We talked and ate as he reiterated the fascinating history of the secret project that resulted in the birth of a remarkable machine, which has survived mainly because of his foresight and supreme effort. It was all far from plain sailing, however, and plenty of skullduggery was afoot from a number of parties, not least the design team themselves!

The story about the Amiga's genesis has been told before, but it is only relatively recently that Jay and Commodore have been seeing eye to eye about the machine and its evolution. Also, there are many little anecdotes untold before now...

Jay: "The story starts in the early 1980's with a company not originally called Amiga, but Hi Toro, which was started by Dave Morris, our president, but before all that I used to work with Atari and I wanted to do a 68000 machine with them. We had just finished the Atari 800 box and they were not about to spend another umpteen dollars on research for a 16-bit machine and the processor chip itself cost $100 apiece. RAM was also real expensive and you need twice as much. They couldn't see the writing on the wall and they just said 'No', so I quit!."

Jay Miner is not a man to say "No" to, and it's quite clear that Atari must still be regretting their myopic decision. Anyway, Jay still held the concept of an all-powerful 16-bit machine but the bills had to be paid.

"I went to a chip company called Xymos as I knew the guy who started it. He gave me some stock and it looked like an interesting startup company (I've worked for a lot of new companies). Going back to Atari, Larry Caplan was one of the top programmers on the Atari 2600 video game. He and the other programmers wanted a pay raise, or at least a small royalty, a nickel per cartridge in fact, on the software that was selling like crazy. Atari was making a fortune and they said 'NO' so they all said 'Goodbye' and they went off and started a little company called Activision. Larry rang me up about two years later in early '82 and said he wasn't happy at Activision and suggested we start up a company. I had a lot of stock in Xymos and suggested we et some outside finance from back East. We hired a little office on Scott Boulevard, Santa Clara and they got a Texas millionaire to put up some money. He liked the idea of a new video game company which is what Larry Caplan wanted to do. He was going to do the software and I was going to design the chips.

"I told Dave Morris about some of the ideas I had about designing a games machine that was expandable to a real computer and he thought that was a great idea but didn't tell any of his investors. I moved to Santa Clara from Xymos. They were still called Hi Toro but the investors weren't too keen so they chose 'Amiga' and I didn't like it much — I thought using a Spanish name wasn't such a good move. I was wrong!"

The design team at Hi Toro/Amiga was assembled from a bunch of people over the next few months. Jay says that they were looking for people not just interested in a job, but with a passion for the Amiga (code-named Lorraine after the president's wife) and the immense potential it offered.

"We worked out a deal whereby I got a salary and some stock and I also got to bring my dog Mitchy into work every day. Dave did reserve the right to go back on that one if anyone else objected but Mitchy was very popular."

I asked Jay to sum up what it was like to work on the Amiga:

"The great things about working on the Amiga? Number one, I was allowed to take my dog to work and that set the tone for the whole atmosphere of the place. It was more than just companionship with Mitchy — the fact that she was there meant that the other people wouldn't be too critical of some of those we hired, who were quite frankly weird. There were guys coming to work in purple tights and pink bunny slippers. Dale Luck looked like your average, off-the-street homeless hippy with long hair and was pretty laid back. In fact, the whole group was pretty laid back. I wasn't about to say anything — I knew talent when I saw it and even Parasseau (The Evangelist) who spread the word was a bit weird in a lot of ways. The job gets done and that's all that matters. I didn't care how solutions came about even if people were working at home.

"There were a lot of various arguments and the way most were sorted out was by hitting each other with the foam baseball bats. They stung a bit if you got hit hard. There was a conflict in the fundamental design philosophy with some like R.J. Mical wanting the low cost video game (the investor's side, you might say). Others like Dale Luck and Carl Sassenrath wanted the best computer expansion capability for the future. This battle of cost was never ending, being internal, among us, as well as with the investors and Commodore.

"You go through stages in any large project like the Amiga of thinking 'This looks great and it's going to sell really well,' and then things go wrong and you just want to quit!"

The unique spirit at Amiga was such that people worked tirelessly on their various projects, remembering

that the software was well on the way to completion before any silicon had been pounded into the graphics chips. Carl Sassenrath was brought in to do the operating system and was asked at the interview "What would you like to design?". He just replied that he wanted to do a multi-tasking operating system, and thus was born the Exec which lies at the very heart of the Amiga. Carl has maintained his close links with Commodore and was instrumental in designing CDTV. Incredible really that they opted for such a sophisticated backdrop for a games machine. Already, strange things were afoot...

"I started thinking about what we wanted to design. Right from the beginning I wanted to do a computer like the A2000 with lots of expansion slots for drives, a keyboard etc. I'd also read a bit about blitters and so I talked with a friend called Ron Nicholson who was also interested in them and he came to join us. We came up with all sorts of functions for the blitter. Line drawing was added much later at the request of Dale Luck, one of our software guys. This was about two weeks before the CES show where the Amiga was unveiled. I told him we can't put that in there as the chips were nearly done and there wasn't enough room. He fiddled about and showed me what registers were needed, so in it went."

"In 1983 we made a motherboard for the breads to be plugged in, took this to the CES show and we showed some little demos to selected people away from the main floor. At the show itself, they wrote the bouncing ball demo and this blew people away. They couldn't believe that all this wiring was going to be three chips."

The chips took three designers including Jay (who did the Agnus) almost two years to design (1982-84) and throughout this time the ever-expanding software team were working on what became the Amiga's operating system libraries and such like. They had a pretty tough job writing for the most advanced, radical hardware ever conceived for a home machine, and which didn't really exist, except for a zillion and one ideas and a white board of obscure diagrams.

"Once you've got the design concept for the chips, all you need to do then is pick names for the registers and tell the software people something like 'I'm going to have a register here that's going to hold the colours for this part and it's called whatever.' They can the simulate it in their software. We then built hardware simulators called bread boards and that was a chore. We originally did the chips using the NMOS process which has much higher current consumption than the state of the art CMOS. I'm surprised that Commodore haven't re-designed the chips in CMOS which is the big stumbling block to bringing out a portable. We did that because at the time, CMOS was much slower than NMOS and not as reliable. It's now much faster, so why are Commodore still using NMOS for some of their chips?

"Hold and Modify came from a trip to see flight simulators in action and I had a kind of idea about a primitive type of virtual reality. NTSC on the chip meant you could hold the Hue and change the luminance by only altering four bits. When we changed to RGB I said that wasn't needed any more as it wasn't useful and I asked the chip layout guy to take it off. He came back and said that this would either leave a big hole in the middle of the chip or take a three-month redesign and we couldn't do that. I didn't think anyone would use it. I was wrong again as that has really given the Amiga its edge in terms of the colour palette.

"It was Commodore who wanted to leave things as NTSC/PAL output. We wanted to make them RGB but monitors were so expensive in those days — IBM's and Mac's were monochrome. I'd put the converter on the chip and this was a very low cost way of doing things as it saved a lot of parts, but by the time Commodore bought us, the bottom had fallen out of the video game market and we were moving more towards a computer so Commodore agreed to finance RGB as well."

Seeing pictures of the early Amiga, it's almost impossible to imagine that the piles of wires and boards could eventually be reduced to something the size of an A500. The first Agnus was three lots of eight bread boards, each with 250 chips, and this was repeated for the other two custom chips which were nicknamed Daphne and Portia in those days and metamorphosed into Denise and Paula.

"Those were a nightmare to keep running with all the connections keeping breaking down. They're still around somewhere. We hired lots of other people to design peripherals which kept the notorious silicon valley spies away from the office. All they could see were joysticks and they weren't too much of a threat.

"In 1983 we made a motherboard for the breads to be plugged in, took this to the CES show and we showed some little demos to selected people away from the main floor. At the show itself, they wrote the bouncing ball demo and this blew people away. They couldn't believe that all this wiring was going to be three chips. The booming noise of the ball was Bob Parasseau hitting a foam baseball bat against our garage door. It was sampled on an Apple][and the data massaged into Amiga samples. CES was really important to us as we were getting short of money and the response from that show really lifted the team. We were still short of money and several re-mortgages later we managed to keep up with the payroll. It's amazing how much it costs to pay 15 or 20 people!"

With things running desperately close, Amiga were forced to look for more finance to keep the ball bouncing. They turned eventually to Jay's old employer, Atari:

"Atari gave us $500,000 with the stipulation that we had one month to come to a deal with them about the future of the Amiga chipset or pay them back, or they got the rights. This was a dumb thing to agree to but there was no choice."

They offered $1 per share but Amiga were hoping for much more than that. The offer was refused and as Atari knew about the troubles of Amiga, they then cut the offer to 85 cents a share. Commodore stepped in at the last minute to scoop the prize from under the noses of their arch rivals and take the Amiga for themselves, shelling out a mere $4.25 per share and installing the team in the Los Gatos office. Jay continued the story:

"Tramiel [the president of Atari] was livid when he found out he couldn't get his hands on the chips, as the whole idea of financing us was just to get the chips, not the people designing them, unlike Commodore who needed to keep the team intact. The Atari 400 and 800 *[which Jay designed also]* series were great computers in their day, but you know things move on. When he didn't get the chipset, his only alternative was to design a new computer without the custom chips — so he came up with the ST. This wasn't a bad little computer but lacked the power of the Amiga's chipset."

Tell us something we don't know, Jay!! What about MIDI, why wasn't that included?

"Actually MIDI isn't so far away from the standard serial port on the Amiga, and soon after the machine was released, someone came up with a tiny plug-in box that gave you all the MIDI inputs and outputs, but Commodore refused to manufacture and push it which was one of my big disagreements with them. If you've got a little company doing great third party products which makes your machine so much more competitive, you've got to support them. Commodore in the past have been too greedy, wanting everything for themselves without paying for it, but I think they're changing. I hope they're changing, anyway."

The Amiga 1000 really didn't take shape until long after Commodore bought it. The president had the idea of sliding the keyboard underneath the machine and it took nearly a year to redesign the motherboard to fit in. Everything was set and then Commodore decided that 512K of RAM was too much:

"They wanted a 256K machine as the 512 was too expensive. Back in those days RAM was very pricey, but I could see it had to come down. I told them it couldn't be done as we were too close to being finished, it would spoil the architecture, etc, etc. Dave Needle came up with the idea of putting the cartridge on the front which worked. I was in favour of putting sockets on the motherboard so the user could just drop in the chips."

As events turned out, Jay's opinion was vindicated when, on release, it became patently obvious that the machine needed the 512K to do anything meaningful and this was the shipping form in the UK. Commodore's short sightedness cost the world another 6 months without the Amiga, during which time RAM prices fell anyway!

"I spent this time polishing up the software / hardware documentation, renaming registers to be more meaningful. This was actually time well spent in the end."

Regular readers will know that I'm always going on about how wonderful Intuition is to work with so I asked Jay to tell me a bit about its development.

"R.J. Mical pretty much did it all himself. He was holed up for three weeks (!) and came out once to ask Carl Sassenrath about message ports. That's it, really! He wrote Intuition and went on to do the graphics package, *Graphicraft*, as no-one else could do it right. Remember the Jarvik 7 heart animation — they actually talked to the guy and got permission to draw it, and the animation was cycling the colour registers. A lot of quite beautiful pseudo-animations were done that way. That's how we did the rotating pattern of the bouncing ball. Other machines couldn't use that system."

Once all the software was done, it was time for the big release of the A1000. Jay's reaction:

"There were a lot of compromises which I didn't like, but it was better than it might have been if we hadn't gotten our way on a lot of things. We didn't get our way on everything, though. The 256K RAM was a real problem. The software people knew it was inadequate but nobody could stand up to Commodore about it. We had to really argue to put the expansion connector on the side and this was before the deal was finalised, so we were close to sinking everything. The lowest cost way of doing it was the edge connector and I'm glad it got through.

"Once the A1000 was out we were kind of at a loss. There was so much dealer and developer support necessary that a large proportion of our company went into that. We had 11 or 12 people in that and we wanted to expand, but Commodore wouldn't let us and, in fact, they made us lay off some people. We tried to talk Commodore into building a machine with vertical slots and they eventually came out with the A2000, but they weren't keen at first."

Once the Amiga was released, work at Los Gatos continued, but the days for this fine, but maverick, design team were numbered.

"I was really pleased to see Commodore moving in the direction of the A2000 — it was the first Amiga you could really tailor to your own needs and this was one of the reasons for the success of the early Apples. We then wanted to go onto horizontal slots, like the A3000 as that would be easier to cool and shield — there was a design to do it, but at that time the A2000 came from Germany so that's the way we went. We wanted to do the Auto-configuation for the slots but Commodore weren't keen because it added 50¢ to the cost, so we had a big battle with them and did it anyway. Our divisional manager from Commodore was a guy called Rick Geiger. He was pretty good at keeping Commodore off our backs. However, there were others who were good at figuring out what we were up to and saying 'No' all the time. Sometimes Rick would protect us and he was trying hard to give Commodore something they wanted badly, MS-DOS compatibility. Some company promised they could deliver a software solution, but it never really worked that well.

"There was a young fellow of Jewish persuasion — an engineer — I knew he was Jewish because he wore one of those funny little hats to work. That's no problem for me — I didn't mind if people wore pink bunny slippers as long as the job got done. Anyway, he promised MS-DOS on a small card to make an IBM interface. He worked alone, and weeks went by with nothing appearing despite all the promises which worried me a lot, and this really led to Rick's downfall. He promised he could do it and nobody kept close enough tabs on him — always a few more weeks. Commodore started advertising and the board didn't work, so both men were canned. This was the start of the downfall for the Los Gatos division. I've never really told this before as it was too personal, but I can't remember the designer now so it doesn't matter so much. It shows that you need your peers looking over your work to get things right."

How important did you thing PC compatibility was going to be?

"Eventually Sidecar came out from Germany but there were a lot of bugs in the software and the Los Gatos team helped with solving those. They did that before the 2000. It's funny, but I never really saw MS-DOS compatibility as being that important for the Amiga. I said at the time to Commodore 'Hey, we're different. Try to take advantage of that, not imitate or simulate other people.' We could make our commands more similar to theirs. There's a tendency when you're writing new software to try and be different with names and functions, but it isn't really necessary. We could do a better job than MS-DOS, which would have been enough with the Amiga's superior operating system and colour resolution capabilities to take a really big bite out of IBM. Instead, they kept promising compatibility and not delivering — which is worse."

After that, Commodore wanted the design team to move back East and, not surprisingly, they declined — so gradually the Los Gatos facility was closed down and Jay left. We carried on talking about the interim period and also about the staff recently at Commodore:

"The VP of engineering [Bill Sydnes] got canned. He designed the PC Junior which really crashed (one of IBM's big mistakes) and gave the Amiga a window of opportunity which Commodore failed to exploit. A little competitive advertising would have gone a long way."

What about the overall handling of the Amiga over the years? Does it annoy you that there are 10 times as many PCs as Amigas?

"Yeah, that really does annoy me. I don't have any financial connections with Commodore any more so I don't get anything out of Amiga sales. Things should have been a lot different. I still feel fatherly towards the Amiga, more so than any of the Ataris. What frustrates me the most is that people are missing out on something very special in the Amiga. They tell me about their IBMs and wonderful Macs but they're still missing out."

The Toaster is a killer product over here. What do you think?

"It's a fantastic product. Commodore made a really big mistake in not embracing the Toaster in its early days, and getting a real piece of it. I never even envisaged it back in the design stages. TV image manipulation just wasn't around then. I put genlock cicuitry and sync signalling into the first designs so that side of things we appreciated. I had no idea that things like the Toaster were coming."

What would you like to see in the future?

"I'd like to see Commodore grab hold of one of these 24-bit cards like the GVP or DMI boards and put it in as standard. The Amiga badly needs a standardization of high resolution 24-bit colour modes. The JPEG board from DMI is another wonderful product which needs to be standard in high end Amigas. They'll wait like they always do until someone else has made the standard and try and add something in while others are going to make a bundle of money... look at GVP. Gerard Bucas was VP of Engineering and he wasn't doing things the way Commodore liked, so he left. He saw a chance to make some money — and look at the size of GVP. They're competing with Commodore. The next generation Amiga needs a real time JPEG converter and 24-bit graphics to stay ahead.

"I did get together with Lou Eggibrecht [the new VP of Engineering] for about 10 minutes and I was very pleased. He promised he'd fly out to have dinner with me and talk about the Amiga. I asked hem some questions about the future direction of the chips and got the kind of answers I was looking for — the kind of things we've been talking about. High resolution, new architecture, more competitive. His understanding of the present architecture was very encouraging. I'd love to work as a consultant for them, but I don't know how much I could contribute."

What's your opinion of the A4000?

"You know, Commodore actually gave me one today at the show — the first time I ever got anything out of them!

"Putting the IDE drive onto the A4000 motherboard was a terrible mistake — every previous Amiga has benefited from SCSI. I'm really tickled with the A4000 though. I was looking at it over the last few days and thinking how could I get to buy one of these without the wife getting to know. I have two A2000s which are fine for the BBS stuff I do at the moment.

"They've improved the chipset in the 4000, taking the colours to 256 from 8 bitplanes. The higher resolution and more colours are really fast. The MS-DOS interface [CrossDOS] is quite nice but I'm unhappy about the SCSI and they didn't go to full 16-bit audio. But according to Eggibrecht that's coming soon. I'm also a little disappointed they didn't use the 040's memory management facilities. The 3.0 operating system looks very good with datatypes and a number of other great features. Who needs MS-DOS and Windows?"

What about CDTV?

"CDTV is quite a nice idea, but the software has to be right. Can you think of anything more horrible than trying to read an encyclopedia or the Bible on a TV, rather than a nice crisp RGB monitor? As a low cost entertainment system it's a good viable long-term project. I hope Commodore won't drop the ball if things aren't as good initially; they can take on Phillips."

What are your favorite products?

"I love the bulletin board software as that's what I'm into at the moment. ADPro is also a fantastic program. I picked up a program called Scala and I'd like to get into that — its user interface is very impressive. I have a GVP '030 accelerator and that's incredible. The hard drive on the 32-bit card is very fast indeed — it's like a new machine."

Conclusion: Talking with Jay Miner is one of the best experiences an Amiga owner can have. He really is the Father of the Amiga and his passion for the machine is so apparent. It's easy to understand the frustrations he must have at not seeing things go exactly as he wanted, with the full potential of the machine yet to be realized, some eight years after its release. One has to marvel that it is still around and selling well given its superior competition and the natural tendency for serious users to turn to the IBM/Mac platforms. It's also clear that the Amiga Corporation contained one of the most innovative design teams ever assembled, and it is so tempting to speculate where the Amiga would be today if they had stuck together, and the efforts of Commodore had been more constructive. Their marketing people have yet to understand what the Amiga is truly about, and why it is so special. Trying to sell it as a PC is wrong as it is far more than a speadsheet, word processing machine. Unlocking doors is what the Amiga is about, and it is only recently that the third party software is doing the remarkable hardware justice. Only time will tell if the Amiga can make the impact it is capable of and maybe Commodore should take on board the views of the Padre.

Editor's Note: Jay Miner died on June 20, 1994 from heart failure due to kidney complications. He passed away at the El Camino Hospital in Mountain View. He will be sadly missed by all.

Linda Robinson Jeff Robinson

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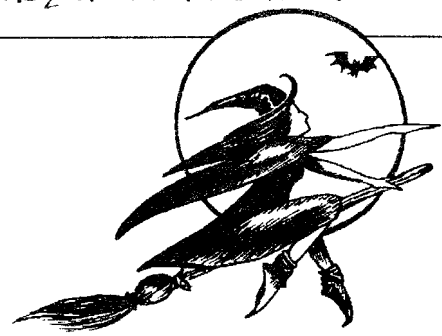
Thought For The Month

Girls are always running
through my mind

—

They don't dare walk



METCOM 94

CLASSES There will be three classes offered at METCOM this year. The Hard Drive Basics class will cover concepts important to understanding and making the most of your hard drive. The *PageStream* class will be a complete overview of desktop publishing with *PageStream 3.0* (Soft-Logik). The *CanDo* class will be an introduction to this unique interactive authoring tool with an emphasis on the NEW features of *CanDo 3.0* (INOVAtronics). The Hard drive class is a 1½ hour session scheduled for 10:30 AM to noon. The *PageStream* and *CanDo* classes are 3 hours each and will start at 1:00 PM and end at 4:00 PM. Pre-registered students will be given a disk filled with utilities/files related to the class.

Class sizes are very limited, so please register early! There is a registration form included in your newsletter. The form will also be available at the September meetings. For further information, contact Harold Williams at (817) 483-0537.

And don't forget...

- FREE ADMISSION
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Arlington Convention Center
I-30 near Six Flags and
The Ballpark in Arlington

November 5, 10 am 'til 5 pm

Amiga Library News

public domain and shareware picks from Bill Raecke

I didn't have time to write my library article in August. To add insult to injury, in September I didn't even have time to get out a newsletter. Sorry. Sometimes there's just more than I can keep up with. In August there were 22 new MCCC disks added to our collection. This month there are 5 more. To make amends for my past failings, this month's article will cover both month's disks.

Deluxe Galaga version 2.3 by Edgar M. Vigdal

I know, some of you are probably getting tired of having me write about *Deluxe Galaga* every month, but it's still one of the best games I've ever seen — and it keeps getting upgraded. This month's version has some ups and some downs, however. On the upside, there is a new, higher value coin that drops and the fact that it is now easier to collect large sums of money. There is also a new play mode that allows two players to play simultaneously. On the downside, the game is more difficult to play on the EASY level than it was before. But on the upside, the game is **easier** to play on the NORMAL level, so I guess it all balances out OK. There is one new bug, however. Each time you play *Galaga*, a configuration file is written out to your s: directory. The next time the game is started, that file is read so that you don't have to set your configuration each time you play. That's not new — the game has always done that. What **is** new, however, is that the second time you play it, the game's screen will be all out of whack and the game will be unplayable. That's right, the game can't read it's own configuration files! There are a couple of work-arounds. Either delete the configuration file before you play the game each time (in which case you will have to go through the configuration screen each time) or, better yet, simply take your configuration file from the last version, put it in your s: directory, and turn off the delete bit (you can use *Directory Opus* or the shell command "PROTECT <pathname>Deluxe_Galaga -D"). This will prevent *Deluxe Galaga* from overwriting the configuration file and the game will work perfectly each time. Hopefully, this bug will be corrected soon. This game is on the first disk of the month — MCCC-A_731.

Tracker Music

With as many disks as there are this month, you knew there had to be music. Actually, the selection is rather lean with just 7 tunes on 2 disks. The only one I can recommend is Luzifer on MCCC-A_732.

Pictures

And, of course, there have to be pictures as well. The best of this month can be found on MCCC-A_733. There are four pictures of the comet Shoemaker-Levey 9's impact on Jupiter. They are in GIF and JPEG format and are excellent quality.

Tracker Players

This seems to be the month when everyone is updating their MOD and MED music players. For the record, the best MOD player is still *MultiPlayer* which was NOT updated this month. It is the most bug-free and the most versatile. But for those who would like to check out the competition, *DASModPlayer version 3.2* is on MCCC-A_745; *DeliTracker2 version 2.07* is on MCCC-A_746; and *HippoPlayer version 1.11* is on MCCC-A_751. *HippoPlayer* deserves special mention because it comes quite close to matching the capabilities of *MultiPlayer* — and *HippoPlayer* can run under OS version 1.2 and up (*MultiPlayer* requires at least OS 2.0).

term 4.0 by Olaf Barthel

term is my favorite terminal program. As far as I can tell, it is the most powerful terminal available in that it can be configured to handle any possible setup. And it is certainly the best-looking terminal package available for the Amiga. It looks the way Amiga programs should look. Version 4.0 redesigns most windows. The phonebook, upload/download panel, etc. have all been redone. Problem is, when he redid the windows, Olaf designed them so they require a larger than standard screen to open on. This means that you either need to expand the *term* screen you run on or the windows will pop up on their own screens. That's a problem. And that means that I have mixed feelings about this update. On the plus side, there are new features. The most important of these is the addition of a script learn mode. Let *term* write your login scripts or any other script at just the touch of a button. Saves a lot of trouble. My advice is to take a look at it and if you don't like the oversized windows and don't need the script writing feature, go back to the earlier version available in the library or on the BBS. Due to its size, *term* is distributed in the library in archived format. There is more here than you will need, because the full distribution includes such things as the source code, documentation in many formats, special versions for 68020 and greater processors, etc. You'll find the entire distribution spanning disks 736 through 738.

Icons

For those of you using the Magic Workbench palette, this month's disks contain the icons you've been looking for. There are collections on MCCC-A_756 through 758. For those unfamiliar, the Magic Workbench palette gives a very professional-looking interface. Check it out. ✓

*type*SMITH v2.02

a high-powered outline font editor
usenet review by Dylan McNamee

*type*SMITH is an outline font editor. It can edit and produce industry standard PostScript fonts (type 1 and type 3 format), Soft-Logik fonts, Compugraphic fonts, and Amiga bitmap fonts. *[Editor's Note: The latest version of typeSMITH, 2.5, will also load and save the popular TrueType format.]*

The retail price for *type*SMITH 2.0 is $199.95 (US). Soft-Logik customers pay $125 (for a limited time, $110).

Upgrade from 2.01 to 2.02 is free. A patch has been uploaded to Aminet in the file / pub/ aminet/ biz/ patch/ ts202pch.lha.

Special Hardware and Software Requirements

2 MB RAM required.

512K Chip RAM works. 1 MB or more Chip RAM recommended.

Supports 68020 or greater processors, hard drives, and PostScript printers (among other things).

AmigaDOS 2.0 or greater required.

Copy Protection

None. Hard drive installable.

Machine Used For Testing

Amiga 2500/30, 1 MB Chip RAM, 6 MB Fast RAM. AmigaDOS 2.1.

Installation

Installation proceeded without any problems by following the included instructions.

Review

This is a MAJOR upgrade to *type*SMITH 2.01, almost as big as the difference between *type*SMITH 1 and *type*SMITH 2. I'll review the whole program, trying to highlight the differences between 2.01 and 2.02, while still making sense to folks that don't own any version of *type*SMITH (yet).

If you need to produce a high-quality outline font on the Amiga, I believe *type*SMITH is the only choice. Fortunately, it's a very respectable program, and it keeps getting better. Much like *Fontographer* on the Macintosh, this program lets users create their own publication-quality fonts that will print without "jaggies" on high resolution printers. It also lets users tweak an existing font to add a character, modify a character, or whatever. Its drawing tools are sufficient to create almost any kind of figure, and *type*SMITH can export character shapes as IFF DR2D drawings for use with other Amiga programs.

I've used it to create a PostScript font of my handwriting (it actually looks uncannily real...) as well as to create a more normal text font. For the handwriting font, I wrote an alphabet on paper, scanned it (on a PC), and read the file into DPaint 4 where I saved each letter as an IFF brush. *type*SMITH was able to read each bitmap, scale it appropriately, and put it in the background (in grey) to be traced over. It has an "autotrace" feature that makes the tracing task much easier. (You still have to do significant touch-up, but it saves a lot of mouse-work.)

*type*SMITH has always been able to edit PostScript fonts, but version 2.02 makes this even easier by being able to read PFA format as well as PFB format fonts. (Previously, PFA files had to be converted with the "dl2pfb" program.) Using this feature, I've been able to examine all the fonts on the new Bitstream 500 fonts CDROM (windows version, only $30) as well as the other PostScript fonts I own.

Among the new features in 2.02 is the ability to edit the character widths from the edit window, which is really nice. Also, points can be moved with fine precision now by clicking on them and pressing arrow keys with the shift key. All in all, the program has a very well-tuned feel to it.

Documentation

I'm not much of a documentation reader, and with *type*SMITH, I didn't have to resort to reading the documentation much, except to figure out how "composite" characters work, and how they're edited (it's a bit tricky). All my experiences with the documentation have been fine.

Bugs

This release fixes a number of bugs that were in version 2.01. Being a beta tester for them, if there were any bugs I experienced, I would have told them already, and they would have been fixed. :)

Vendor Support

The fact that such a major update to *type*SMITH is available for free on the net (as well as the recent announcement in c.s.a.announce) is clear evidence of Soft-Logik's continuing commitment to the Amiga. I think they're good folks. I am a beta tester for them (hence the quick review of this brand new release) and have been impressed with the company from all sides.

Conclusions

I give it a solid 4.5 stars out of 5. Not that I can think of anything lacking, but if the program continues to improve, I'll need room in the rankings to accommodate.

In light of the strong support Soft-Logik is giving the Amiga, and that this is such a strong program, I'd highly

➪ Page 9

MultiFileSystem

and alternate disk formats
by Johnny C. Kitchens

One of the many Amiga virtues is versatility. At times there seems to be no limit to what it can do or be made to do. One of those versitile areas is the floppy drive. While the floppy drives have been criticized for their lack of speed, no one can say they don't have everything else going for them. Increased capacity stands as one high point in their favor. With the advent of high density drives that capacity increases to a formidable 1.76 megs of capacity. Another advantage for them is their ability to read other formats of disks, such as IBM PC disks. This feature became incorporated into the Amiga when *CrossDOS* was included in the most recent OS releases. Recently an announcement of a similar setup for Mac disks appeared called, appropriately enough, *CrossMAC*. To further show off the versatility of the Amiga drives, some clever programmers have come up with alternative formats for the drives to use. One is called the *ProFileSystem*. Its claim to fame is increased speed. An even more viable alternative comes in the form of *Disk Spare*. By taking advantage of the flexible design of the Amiga drives, *Disk Spare* succeeds in increasing capacity of the floppies as well as their speed. The capacity increases over 100K for the double density disk and over 200K for the high density disk. Though the speed increase isn't as good as *ProFileSystem*, combining its speed with increased capacity makes it a working alternative to the standard format. It will also stop viruses in their tracks! Not all of them — but the boot-block type won't find the right place to write. It works!

None of the other formats really interested me, until I found I needed to move files from my Amiga to the PC's at work. The process wasn't all that hard, but it took a moment to get it right. I would mount up PC0: or PC1:, insert a disk where I would then get two icons — one for the Amiga and one that said *CrossDOS* for PC format. This wasn't too bad, but doing two disk at a time meant four new icons on the screen. Not bad, but things are starting to look cluttered. A friend of mine convinced me to give *Disk Spare* and *ProFileSystem* a try. I liked the way they performed, but all of those icons! Enter *MultiFileSystem*. *MultiFileSystem* allows the use of different file systems without the confusion of multiple icons...plus it automatically detects the format of the disk. Inserting a disk formatted with any of the four previously mentioned setups are automatically detected in my system and a single icon comes up and I'm ready to use the disk. No fuss and no mess. The magic of *MultiFileSystem* continues when I need to format. Insert a blank disk and select format, and a requester comes up with a button for each format you are using. In my case there are four buttons. Copying disks has been incorporated into the *MultiFileSystem* as well. Copying a disk over to another calls *MultiFileSystem* into play to automatically determine the correct format for the destination disk. This is the way it should work... automatically. One further drive enhancement was suggested to me, and I'll pass it along to you. Inserting a disk into a drive brings about a set of parameters to ensure positive reading of the disk. One of those is retries. It is set to a default setting of ten. When inserting a non-Amiga formatted disk, such as a PC disk, the drive goes into a retry mode that can reach the full ten tries. Setting it to one reduced recognition time considerably. How can you reset it? There are several programs to use. *NickPrefs* has a program for that purpose. A clone of that for 3.0 and above users is in the form of *TrackdiskPrefs*. Some simpler versions without interfaces exist as well, such as *SetTDDelay*. Using one of these the recognition time dropped from thirteen seconds to just five, after setting retries to one. If you're wondering about disadvantages, I can't say that I've yet to see a problem. The whole setup works without a problem.

If you need the use of alternative disk formats such as PC format on a regular basis then take a look at *MultiFileSystem*. If you need greater disk capacity without resorting to compression then take a look at *Disk Spare*. With compression even more could be squeezed onto the disk. Using them together will be even better! Both of these are available from the BBS or club library.✓

TypeSmith

continued from previous page

recommend buying it if you do anything with desktop publishing or even just have an interest in fonts.

[Editor's Note: Since this article was written, a new version has been released — 2.5. This is another major release. Here are just some of the biggest improvements.

- *The ability to load and save TrueType fonts (as mentioned earlier).*
- *An automatic option to "reduce font complexity." Using this option will remove unnecessary points from characters. This allows* PageStream *to print some fonts that were previously too complex.*
- *An automatic option that corrects "path directions" so that fonts will print properly.*
- *Improved font "hints" for a more professional look.*
- *Built-in AmigaGuide help system.*

And lots more...] ✓

Amiga Bootup

the screen color decoder

by Rick Russell — AAUG

Have you ever turned on your Amiga and found that instead of getting the usual response, the screen displays a solid color? I've had it happen to me and it can be scary. You know something is wrong but haven't the slightest idea of where to begin looking. Well, I found some answers while reading Denny Atkin's book *Best Amiga Tips and Secrets* and thought I'd pass on the information.

When power is applied to your Amiga it immediately begins a series of preliminary checks. The programmers provided visual clues by assigning different screen colors to each series of tests. When the screen stops on a particular color, there's something wrong that caused that series of tests to fail. It's usually a good idea to reboot your computer to see if the same failure (color screen) occurs. If the software reboot (Ctrl-Amiga-Amiga) keeps failing, try turning your computer power off, wait 15 seconds and then turn power back on. If your failure is still persistent, then you have what is called a hard failure. Now is the time to dig a little deeper into the problem or request assistance from knowledgeable friends, your user group, or the computer repair center. Given below are a list of screen colors and their meaning.

Dark Gray

The initial hardware and CPU test passed. The problem resides in software execution. If you're comfortable with messing with your computer innards, try pressing down on all the chips to make sure they are all seated properly in their sockets. Before touching any chips, make sure you touch the chassis case first to ground any static you might have on you! Static will cause damage to computer chips! Sometimes vibrations from transporting your computer can cause the chips to come out of their sockets. If that doesn't work then call for help or visit your friendly computer service center.

Light Gray

The initial software test passed. The problem resides in one of the advanced software functions. Try checking the chips on the motherboard to see if they are properly seated. It wouldn't be a bad idea to remove all additional cards (accelerators, memory card, and even the hard drive card) to see if the problem remains. If the problem does go away, then one of your peripherals is the cause of your problem. Install each card back into your computer one at a time (between computer reboots) until the problem re-appears. Bingo, you've found your problem. If, after removing all your peripherals, the problem still exists, then you'll know two things: 1) Your cards are good, meaning the problem resides somewhere on the motherboard and 2) it's time to visit your local computer repair depot.

Red

This indicates a ROM error was detected. The Read Only Memory (ROM) chip failed in providing good data to the CPU. According to Denny Atkin, this can also be caused by a loose Agnus chip or faulty peripheral card. Re-seat the Agnus chip and remove all the expansion cards. If the red screen goes away then add your expansion cards one at a time until the problem re-appears.

Green

This indicates you have a RAM error. One of your Random Access Memory (RAM) chips is faulty. There are several memory testers available in the Public Domain software world and even a few available commercially. GVP includes a program called MEMTEST that will check all your 16 bit and 32 bit RAM memory. To determine which RAM chip failed can be tricky. Some memory test programs will tell you which group of chips contain the failure while others just report a memory failure occurred. Remove all your installed RAM and execute your memory test program. This will check your 1 MB or RAM on the motherboard. Add your RAM in 2 MB increments and rerun the memory tester until the failure re-appears. From there you can swap chips (or SIMM boards as the case may be) until the failure can be pinpointed. Have fun!

Blue

There exists a problem with one of the Amiga's custom chips. Re-check your custom chips (Paula, Denise, Gary, ...) for proper seating in their respective sockets. For those of you that have the custom chips soldered on the motherboard, it's chip replacement time. Grapevine offers an emergency kit with all the custom chips for around $100. I'd check with someone first to verify your problem before ordering any replacement chips.

Yellow

The CPU encountered an error before the system's GURU was initialized. According to Denny Atkin, this could be caused by an added peripheral board. Remove all the boards and re-install one at a time (in between computer reboots) until the problem board appears. Check your problem board's configuration and setup. Usually a jumper correction on the peripheral board will fix the problem.

Please be sure to follow these two simple suggestions when messing around with your computer. **NEVER** install a peripheral card, cable, or chip with power applied and **Beware of Static!** ✓

CHAPTER NEWS

Amiga Central

September News

Johnny Kitchens

With two thirds of 1994 gone, one thing can be said for the year... it's been a year of waiting for Amiga users everywhere. Wait for news on Commodore; wait for news on *PageStream*; wait, wait, and wait some more. Sadly, it's not over yet!

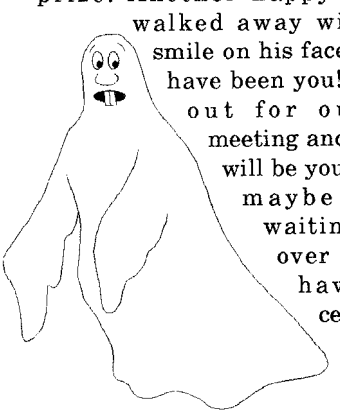
Scott Lamb called to order our meeting this month, followed by an announcement concerning METCOM, our annual get-together. Ned asked a series of questions on what we would like there this year. He asked about auctions, contests, and classes. METCOM will be on Saturday, November 5th. Mark the calendar and be there!

Our rumor session started with news that Samsung has apparently given up on the bidding, and Commodore UK has won. Remember, it's a rumor! If Commodore UK gets it, the new company name will be Amiga Incorporated, and production will commence as soon as possible. They will concentrate on the UK market initially. Engineering will remain in the US. They even say that the AAA chipset will be in the works next year. *PageStream 3.0* appears to be only 4 to 6 weeks away... maybe sooner — after all, we are talking rumors. One thing not a rumor, 3.1 OS is shipping! Call Expert Services, and you don't have to have a Picasso II to get it. Many have already received theirs. At this point, Ned remembered another METCOM announcement. We need help! Please give some time to help out. There are many jobs to choose from.

Our question session was a bit shorter than usual. Someone asked a very technical question about *Imagine*. I hope that answer helped. Someone needed a program that provided a histogram for images. Finally, what are the advantages of 3.1 over 2.1.

Our main presentation tonight featured a member's personal computer system, showing some enhancements to his Workbench. Adding sound to the interface through ARQ's ARexx port. This allows calling individual sounds for different system calls. Also demonstrated was the Magic Workbench and *Magic File Requester*. Magic Workbench shows how to create a really great looking Workbench without using more than 8 colors. By carefully matching colors and blending them just right it appears to have more colors on screen. Everything has a 3D look, as well as a large selection of backgrounds for the windows and screens. Equally usable is the *Magic File Requester* — a fully configurable file requester system. This file requester offers many advantages over the ASL requester, such as size and position control. All devices are visible for easy access, and it's very fast with its own built-in buffer. Finally the Picasso II was given a demonstration, along with a MOD player called *Multi-Player*. All of this provided other users with ideas on how the Amiga can be customized to a particular user's needs easily. If you have a setup that you think might be of interest to others, speak up and let an officer know that you wouldn't mind showing it off at a meeting. It will be appreciated!

Finally, we gave away a door prize. Another happy member walked away with a big smile on his face. It could have been you! Come on out for our next meeting and maybe it will be you. Besides, maybe all the waiting will be over and we'll have a real celebration!



Amiga Central

October News

Johnny Kitchens

September brings about three months of waiting and rumor reading for Amiga users. Every day that things don't get cleared up brings us closer to disaster for the Amiga, but lets not think that!

This month's meeting was kicked off by Harold Williams with plenty of info on METCOM. This will be a get-together to remember. Since there's been plenty to read on this already I won't cover it here again.

Our next discussion really was of a lower level. Chapter problems include decreasing club membership and increasing chapter cost. The two are working against us. The decreasing membership has lowered the amount of money the club has to work with this puts a crimp on operations of the club. In this chapter's case, the meeting location. The price of our room is going up, and we can't afford it for what we use it for. Two alternatives are to merge this chapter with another, or find a cheaper room. The question of the night is what should we do? This took up so much of our meeting that our usual, questions and answers, and ever popular rumors session were skipped all together.

Harold gave us a kind of preview of next month's meeting, by showing us *Pagestream 3.0* and *Typesmith 2.5*. Yes, *Pagestream 3.0* finally arrives! After the longest 4 to 6 week period in history it finally arrives. Apparently less than perfect — still it's enough to get anyone excited about this new piece of software. This is just the the thing to get some excitement back into the Amiga market. Apparently Soft-Logik likes the 4 to 6 weeks thing, as they are promising an update in that period of time to turn on the features currently disabled and to fix any bugs. This will give us 3.01.

CHAPTER NEWS

Hopefully we will have that before the next meeting. That should be one great show! Mark your calendar for October 20th, and come on out and see Bill Raecke WOW us with the Amiga and *Pagestream 3.0*. I'm ready!

Amiga North Dallas

September News

Genny White

Here follows a transcription of "Notes from the Psuedo-Secretary", taken by Gus Reiter and other helpful persons unknown, submitted to you by the apologetic "prodigal secretary":

Our August meeting opened with a discussion of the missing officers: President Danny is lost in the ozone of night shift, VP Steve was at a dog show in San Antonio, I was at PTO Parents Night at the school, and William was MIA in parts unknown. Cheers to Gus Reiter, our lowly and loyal Treasurer, for wearing ALL the hats and presiding over the festivities. Hopefully most of us will be back next month. [Advance warning: Secretary position will DEFINITELY be open next year. Danny won't be around to grovel, so I can stick to my decision not to run again.]

Our Rumor department centered on the letter from David Pleasance of Commodore UK, which by the time you read this will be old news. I feel I must quote the closing line or two, for the hope it brings: "I know these are trying times for us all, but I give you my personal word that we are doing everything in our power to ensure that not only do we keep the Amiga family alive, but that we also lift the brand up to its rightful place at the top of the market where it belongs."

Other tidbytes: there was a discussion of Free Speech, which seems to come up at every meeting these days. Tom Brooks, sysop of the AI BBS, reported a recent crash, but all is up again now. Another BBS, "House Atreides", will be up in October, with 2.2 gigabytes of disk and 4 CD-ROMs on board. You'll hear about METCOM a lot elsewhere — good time will be had by all, try not to miss it on November 5th. The club officers are seeking YOUR input on ideas for an auction as part of METCOM. Would you like to see contests for artwork, music, animation, etc? Call your club officers today! They also need warm bodies to person tables, etc. (People used to MAN a station. Now, I suppose, one PERSONS a station.) *PageStream 3.0* is apparently really out now, as is *Typesmith 2.0* (a font editor). We also heard from a company that repairs Commodore monitors: M.J Electronics, 2661 Midway in Carrollton. There was also a long discussion on MODEMS and FAX MODEMS. To send a FAX, commercial program *GP FAX* or shareware *AFAX* was recommended. Also reported: Expert Systems bought the marketing rights to Workbench 3.1 before Commodore went under, so if you need it, see them.

Our guest presenter was Devin Trites of Calgary, Canada, member of AMUC (AMiga Users of Calgary). He brought us *ICETerm*, a terminal program, and its companion the *ICE BBS*, by Stephen Vermeulan. (ICE=Interactive Communication Environment) *ICETerm* is a multitasking program that can send and receive files at the same time across the serial line, i.e. do multiple downloads, play a game over the doors, and answer mail all simultaneously. It uses the Amiga's graphical user interface to select files, set options, etc. You use your own editor to enter messages. The BBS can be used by ASCII terminal programs like other BBSs, and uses XModem to transfer files. There are only four BBSs using *ICETerm*, three in Calgary and one in California. Devin will send off to Calgary for the Demo version and the freely distributable AmigaGuide manual, and hopefully be able to pass them on to the AI BBS. Nifty features of the BBS include an off-line reader to let you download messages from your favorite SIG, read and respond to them, and upload your responses next time you log on. You can also filter out authors you don't care to hear from. There's a very flexible setup capability for recording and limiting time used, number of calls per day, etc. Downloads are resumable, in case your Mom breaks into the call to see if your phone's broken or something. (Voice of experience there, although a very long time ago!) I wish I'd been able to see it run! Thanks very much, Devin, for sharing it with us.

Next month: Tom Brooks with a C64 emulator. See you in September!

Amiga North Dallas

October News

John Cummings / Steve Nichols

VP Steve Nichols (subbing for the gainfully employed Prez Danny) called the meeting to order at 7:40 P.M. Nineteen members were present and accounted for on this pleasant fall day.

The meeting opened with a call for news. Several members had called the Hotline of Amiga World Magazine to hear a message recorded Monday Sept. the 12th, advising that news would be revealed as soon as it was received. Presently, Commodore UK seems to have the lead bid, with an unconditional offer; followed by Florida based CEI. Stay tuned, fans!

Presently, no Commodore products are available at Metropolitan. *PageStream 3.0* has finally shipped, but with several disabled functions that will be upgraded in, dare I say it, four-to-six weeks! The publisher plans to release

CHAPTER NEWS

the upgrades via the BBS system.

METCOM '94: MCCC VP David Owens has set Nov. 5th as the DAY! Admission is free. Eddie Corr is the AND point man for collecting your Flea Market Items. Bring you FMI's (Flea Market Item's) to the October meeting. Eddie's phone number is 214-423-1947, for those with questions. Itemizing lists, with the Flea Market Rules on the flip, were distributed to interested members.

Illustrious MCCC Prez Ned Kelly asked for volunteers to help staff the MetCOM '94 effort; and Don Sobieck, Don Carver, John Parsons and one-half of Gus Reiter responded in the affirmative. Metropolitan and Commodore Country will have booths.

ITEM: Does anybody know what happened to Amazing Computing's latest issue?

Our visitor and AND August Demo Canadian for ICE BBS, Devin Trites, handed out copies of the ICE TERM program for FREE to many eager hands. Call Devin at 214-255-8740 to arrange to log-on and experience the GUI that is ICE.

It's not Charlie's Angels, but on to the Q & A. A member wanted some help, explanation and code to sift through on the varied graphics format alphabet. You know, JPEG, GIF, TIFF, TGA, et.al. Ned might be able to help and several sources were mentioned. Another member wondered what platform is being used to generate the graphics and handle the effects on Fox's NFL broadcasts. Anybody have a handle on this? Igor has problems getting *PageStream 2.2* to display more than four colors. It was suggested that he make a visit to his local tooltypes. Still another member needed study programs for SAT, ACT and other assorted college admissions type software. We sagely directed him to the "Intel Inside" quagmire.

The Free Form Mtg. made it's way from Q & A to NEWS. An article in the latest InterNet mag favorably mentioned the Amiga and used several screen shots from Amigas. In the September issue of Texas Computing magazine, it was reported that the first efforts are under way to start a Dallas FreeNet. The Computer Art SIG is holding it's next 1st Sunday of the month meeting on Oct. 1 at Maryilyn's house. Call Aurora Chancy at 596-3567 for direction info. D-Paint V is due out soon?

Begging & Groveling Section: At AND, the position of Prez, V-P, Secretary, Treasurer, and Librarian were thrown up for grabs; as well as the MCCC Prez, V-P and Education Co-ordinator. I related to the mesmerized audience the duties of each officer, and then breathlessly awaited the eager responses. Yeah, right! I then threw down the guantlet and offered myself as Prez material, opening the gates for Don Sobieck as prospective Treas. and John Cummings as Librarian. Come ye forth brave souls, and sacrifice thy life.

After all the babble had subsided, it was 9:30 and no time for the presentation; which is fortunate, as reservist Tom Brooks had been called up for a Carribean excursion (too bad he forgot to tell me, as a member of the audience related the news to us all). When he returns, he had better have a note from Lt. Gen. Shelton. In all seriousness, let's hope for a safe journey and a quick return.

Coming in October: *Final Copy II* presented by Steve Nichols

Final Note: AND briefly discussed and expressed appreciation for the fine effort of our MCCC NEWS editor for his superb issues, his excellent club disks, and his efforts as assistant SysOp. So we would like to extend Bill Raecke a sincere Thank You for all of his efforts.

Metro C64/128

September News

Brenda Sessums

Yah te hay, Metro 64/128 Users! Fourteen intelligent, and luckily very fun, members made the August meeting a complete success. Anyone who didn't make it should know that we miss you and we know who you are! Jack Tarvin missed the August meeting to have cataract surgery. We'll be happy to see him at the next meeting (no pun intended).

First, does anyone know where to find some Spanish software? Jim Clentimack from Williamston, N.C. is looking for programs and games in Spanish so he can get his wife, Fatima, and his children, Lourdes and Ana, more interested in computers. If you can help, write to Jim at RFD 2, Box 110, Williamston, N.C. 27892.

Pat Cotton, (817) 281-6784, has a 128, monitor, 1571 disk drive and programs for sale. Call Pat for details at (817) 281-6784. Brenda Sessums, (817) 238-9797, has a 128 and two 1571 drives for sale.

METCOM * METCOM * METCOM * METCOM !!! That's right, it's almost time for METCOM again. This year is will be on November 5 from 10-5 at the Arlington Convention Center. If you have some Commodore stuff you want to sell or are looking for something for your machine, there will be a flea market to plan for. Also, volunteers are needed to help out with the meet. Phil said volunteers get first crack at the flea market, which is pretty important since the good items go fast and early. We will try to have information and flyers about that next time.

Phil Heberer, the moderator for the C-64/128 side of the MCCC BBS, said he hasn't seen anyone uploading or downloading files in the club BBS for quite some time. Is there just no interest, or do we need to have a

CHAPTER NEWS

quick lesson for our members on how to use modems and the BBS? Phil said that other local 64/128 BBSes are having plenty of activity.

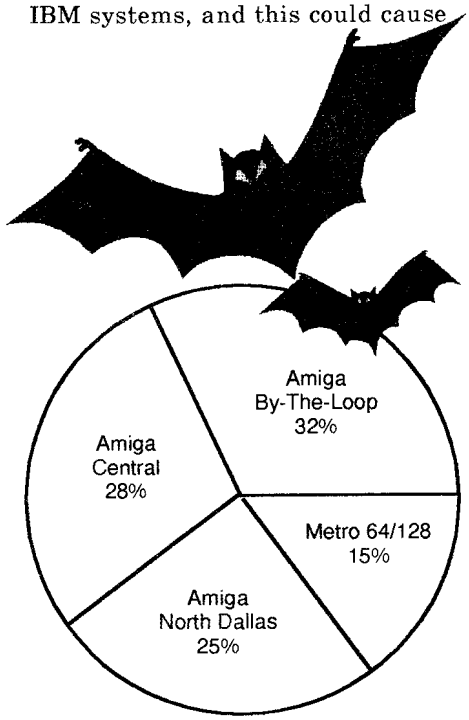
Several items from Commodore Country were displayed and sold at the meeting. But don't fret, you didn't miss all the bargains. CC still has some good deals left and they do offer club members a discount. *Commodore Format* magazine, new programs such as *Crazy Cars 3* and *Swap* from Titus software in California were among the goodies for sale or rent.

Jo Lynn demonstrated *Swap*, a fun puzzle match game. You move the cursor with either joystick or mouse to swap out colored tile on a grid. The more tiles you can remove in the least number of moves will give you more points. Tiles will swap either horizontally or vertically, depending on where you click between them. Click on the mountain icon and you cause an avalanche — the remaining tiles fall to the bottom of the screen, some automagically matching and disappearing! After you get eight stars racked up, you qualify for the next level. There is also a set of colored tile you can move individually and place where you need to remove any odd tiles you missed in earlier strategy.

Blackjack Academy, also from Commodore Country, was another fun demo by Jo Lynn. This one's a slow loader, even with Jiffy DOS, so be patient — it is worth it. A beautiful opening screen shows card graphics of a jack and a ace. The main screen shows an overhead view of a blackjack table. This one can be played by up to five players.

Phil gave a demo of *Superbase*, a commercial database program. The database he showed us was like an electronic address book. He has over 300 Fidonet addresses, the Metro C-64/128 club roster, and other personal addresses. He said the manual is lousy and obviously written by programmers — not too easy for end users (that's us). *Superbase: The Book* is a third party manual which is available for about $15 and it is excellent. Get this if you are interested in this program, because it will make your life much easier. *Superbase* once sold for $80, but is now available new for about $35 from CMD who bought the U.S. rights from the makers in England.

Phil made copies of the new issue of *C-64 Alive* for members. There were two disks full of great stuff this month. Don't forget, it is FREE with your paid membership. One new member was having trouble with his modem. One of the main problems was the software that he got with it. Phil recommended *DesTerm* and for him to print out the excellent documentation that comes with it. Also, Phil said that no matter which modem program you have, you must be sure you are using the right settings. (Ask Phil if you don't know what these are or if you are totally lost!) Another problem that was cited was that some C-64 files are available on BBSs run on Amiga or IBM systems, and this could cause some problems as well. It can be done though. Someone said that the problem is that those BBSes are running on 16-bit machines, and the Commodores are 8-bit machines. Therefore, it makes good sense that you could connect up two phone lines to your computer at the same time and maybe you could get 16 bits (8 bits on each line, that is) — NOT!



Mr. Mysto was shared with the group by John McHugh. This program is somewhat similar to *Lazurus* artificial intelligence simulator on the old PeeCee. In this one, however, you teach *Mr. Mysto* with answers to several questions and he will guess the answer. If you do it right, it works pretty well. This one should now be in the club library if you want a copy.

Door prizes were donated by Phil (*Electronic Checkbook* and *Desert Fox*) and Commodore Country. The big winners in this month's drawing were:

Mike Sessums — *Desert Fox*
Kathy Cole — *Electronic Checkbook*
John McHugh — *Dam Busters*
Samual Owens — *Realm of Impossibility*
Bill Worthingham — *Julius Erving: One on One*
Mary Louise Hagemeyer — *Archon 2: Adept*

In other important news, the Q-Link funeral will be held on Halloween this year. Yes, they are a bust, but it has something to do with poor service and support. Sound familiar COMPUTE? Be sure to let the club officers know what you would like to see in future meetings. Next month we plan on having a demonstration of *Garfield's Printshop* on a color printer. We will also have a guest give a demonstration on midi sequencing and song file creation. Oooooo. See, you don't have to be an officer to give a demo on something you use or like. See you in October!

The Fine Print

The Metroplex Commodore Computer Club

Statement of Purpose: The Metroplex Commodore Computer Club is a not-for-profit organization devoted to the collection and dissemination of computer knowledge, to the encouragement of computer education, and to the use of Commodore computers in the home, at school, and in business.

Legal Stuff: The MCCC is not connected with Commodore Business Machines, Inc. Commodore and Commodore product names (PET, CBM, VIC, C64, C128, and Amiga) are registered trademarks of Commodore, Inc.

Meetings and Membership: Our meetings are open to all. Family membership dues are $24 per year or $15 for six months. and entitle the member to a monthly mailed copy of the MCCC News, free access to the club's extensive public domain and shareware software library, and discounts at many area merchants. An additional $12 annual fee provides access to the MCCC multi-user Bulletin Board System.

The MCCC News

Copyright Information: Material printed in the MCCC News is not copyrighted unless so noted. Articles may be reprinted or otherwise distributed by other user groups or by individuals who may find it helpful as long as proper credit is given to the author and to the MCCC.

Advertising: The MCCC News accepts two kinds of advertising. Member ads are those which are submitted by a member and which are not of a commercial nature. There is no charge for member ads. Commercial ads are those which advertise multiple like items for sale. Rates for camera-ready commercial ads are as follows for a single month or (prepaid consecutive three months): Full Page — $36 ($96); Half Page — $18 ($48); Quarter Page — $12 ($32); Business Card — $6 ($16). Materials to be inserted will cost $.08 per copy (duplication not included) and must be inserted into all newsletters for the month.

Articles: Members are encouraged to submit articles. Articles may be submitted as ASCII text or in Amiga *excellence!, ProWrite, WordPerfect* or *Final Copy* format. They may be uploaded to the MCCC BBS, to StarText, or submitted on disk. If these methods are not possible, I will, as a last resort, accept printed articles. If graphics need to be included they may be submitted as IFF files, DR2D, *PageStream* or *Art Expressions* structured drawings, *Professional Draw* clips or, again as a last resort, printed output.

Deadline: The deadline for submissions to the MCCC News is 7am of the fourth Saturday of each month. Payment must accompany all ad copy. Make checks payable to MCCC and mail c/o Bill Raecke, 2614 Charolais Way, Arlington, Texas 76017.

Extra Copies: Extra Copies of the MCCC News are available at $1 per copy. Orders should be forwarded with the required fee by the regular newsletter deadline.

Normal Meeting Schedule

1st Tuesday	MCCC Board of Directors
2nd Tuesday	Amiga By-The-Loop Chapter
2nd Saturday	Metro C-64/128 Chapter
3rd Tuesday	Amiga North Dallas Chapter
3rd Thursday	Amiga Central Chapter

MCCC Board of Directors

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MCCC BBS Numbers

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SIGS

VidSIG	Chuck Johnson	817-478-7313

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Oct 4 MCCC Board of Directors
7:30 pm — N.Richland Hills Community Center
Loop 820 at Rufe Snow, N.Richland Hills

Oct 8 Metro C-64/128 Chapter
1:30 pm — UNT Health Sciences Building
Lancaster & Camp Bowie, Fort Worth

Oct 11 Amiga By-The-Loop Chapter
7:30 pm — N.Richland Hills Community Center
Loop 820 at Rufe Snow, N.Richland Hills

Oct 18 Amiga North Dallas Chapter
7:30 pm — King of Glory Lutheran Church
6411 LBJ Freeway, Dallas

Oct 20 Amiga Central Chapter
7:30 pm — Arlington Community Center
2800 S. Center, Arlington

Nov 1 MCCC Board of Directors
7:30 pm — N.Richland Hills Community Center
Loop 820 at Rufe Snow, N.Richland Hills

Nov 5 METCOM
10 am 'til 5 pm
Arlington
Convention
Center

November Newsletter Deadline — 7am, October 22

These Dealers offer discounts to MCCC members
Be sure to show your membership card

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